



PLACER LEGACY

CONSERVING OUR LAND
PROTECTING OUR HERITAGE

SUMMER 2015

EASEMENT PROTECTS Side Hill *Citrus Mandarin Orchard*

Placer County along with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Emigrant Trails Greenway Trust, and Placer Land Trust acquired an agricultural easement on the Side Hill Citrus property, a family-owned orchard in rural Lincoln. This 47-acre farm produces mandarins, Meyer lemons, limes, and grapefruits and is located off of Mt. Vernon Road in rural Lincoln.

A dedication ceremony was held in January 2015 recognizing the agricultural easement, the first private-public easement in the county. The easement ensures the farm will be protected from development in perpetuity and will remain as an important agricultural resource. It also preserves a wooded riparian corridor along a tributary to Doty Ravine and oak woodlands on the site.

Family owned and operated, Side Hill Citrus is a certified organic ranch originally established on 17 acres in 1975. At the time of purchase by Richard Ferreira, a small number of diverse citrus trees already existed on the property. Since 1975 another 30 acres has been purchased and added to the ranch, and a mandarin grove of approximately 2,500 trees has been planted on 24 acres of the ranch.

“My family and I intend to continue to be an integral

part of Placer County agriculture and help to educate our community about agriculture well into the future,” said Richard.

Mandarins are a staple fruit of Placer County, and are enjoyed November through February. The first mandarin trees were planted by Welsh immigrants in Penryn in the 1880s. After pear blight in the mid-twentieth century destroyed the County’s bountiful pear industry, mandarins became a choice crop for area farmers.

Today, with approximately 60 local mandarin growers, the Placer County mandarin harvest is celebrated by the annual Mountain Mandarin Festival held each November and Orchard Days in December.

“Placer Land Trust is proud to work with Placer County in what is shaping up to be the premiere public-private conservation partnership in California,”

said Placer Land Trust Executive Director Jeff Darlington. “It’s rare to see a county so actively protect the future of their agricultural economy and rural quality of life. We’re really blessed to have local leaders who understand the benefits of investing in perpetuity.”

Side Hill Citrus is Placer Legacy’s second agricultural easement. In 2010, Placer County purchased an agriculture conservation easement on the 40-acre Natural Trading Company organic farm in Newcastle.



WHAT'S NEW AT

Hidden Falls

REGIONAL PARK

"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul."

— John Muir

Shady picnic and rest areas welcome you along the way.

Hidden Falls Viewing Deck

LEGEND	
<td>Parking</td>	Parking
<td>Picnic Area</td>	Picnic Area
<td>Trash Receptacles</td>	Trash Receptacles
<td>Restrooms</td>	Restrooms
<td>Emergency Phone</td>	Emergency Phone
<td>Map</td>	Map
<td>Waterfalls</td>	Waterfalls
<td>Viewing Deck</td>	Viewing Deck
<td>Vista Point</td>	Vista Point
<td>Bridge</td>	Bridge
<td>Equestrian Staging Area</td>	Equestrian Staging Area
<td>Horse Watering</td>	Horse Watering

TRAILS NORTH OF COON CREEK AND DEADMAN CREEK		
Trail	Distance	Difficulty
Blue Oak Loop	1.3 miles	Moderate
Bobcat Trail	0.2 miles	Moderate
Creek Side Trail	2.4 miles	Moderate
Deer Trail	0.6 miles	Moderate
Grey Squirrel Trail	2.3 miles	Moderate
Hidden Falls Access Trail	0.5 miles	Moderate
North Legacy Way	3.3 miles	Moderate
Pond Turtle Trail	0.1 miles	Difficult
Quail Run Trail	0.1 miles	Easy
Ringtail Trail	1.1 miles	Easy
River Otter Loop	1.4 miles	Difficult
Seven Pools Loop	0.7 miles	Moderate
Seven Pools Vista Trail	0.7 miles	Moderate
Turkey Ridge Road / Trail	0.2 miles	Moderate

TRAILS SOUTH OF COON CREEK AND DEADMAN CREEK		
Trail	Distance	Difficulty
Black Rail Trail	0.1 miles	Easy
Cooper's Hawk Loop	1.3 miles	Easy
Gold Finch Trail	0.7 miles	Easy
Golden Eagle Loop	1.7 miles	Easy
Great Egret Trail	0.5 miles	Easy
Grey Pine Trail	0.1 miles	Easy
Hidden Gateway Accessible Trail	0.3 miles	Easy / Concrete
Mourning Dove Trail	1.5 miles	Easy
Preserve Trail	0.4 miles	Easy
Poggy Trail	1.0 miles	Difficult
Sky Ridge Loop	0.7 miles	Moderate
South Legacy Way	3.7 miles	Moderate / Difficult
Warbler Trail	0.2 miles	Moderate

PLACER LEGACY
CHANGING THE LAND
CONSERVING THE PAST

Placer Legacy, adopted by the Placer County Board of Supervisors in June 2000, was created to implement the open space and conservation policies of the General Plan by meeting a number of objectives:

- MAINTAIN a viable agricultural segment of the economy
- CONSERVE natural features necessary for access to a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities
- RETAIN important scenic and historic areas
- PRESERVE the diversity of plant and animal communities
- PROTECT endangered and other special status plant and animal species
- SEPARATE urban areas into distinct communities

Find out more about Placer Legacy: please contact the Placer County Planning Department at 530-745-3000, or also learn more by visiting us at www.placer.ca.gov/placerlegacy or via email at legacy@placer.ca.gov

Hidden Falls Access Trail

Detail Inset

- Network of **30 miles of trails** through the 1,200 acre park have been completed.
- The trail system has amenities such as **kiosks, directional signs, benches, two waterfall overlook decks, and picnic areas.**
- **Two 100-foot span bridges** were constructed over Coon Creek as part of the trail network that will provide **incredible views** of Coon Creek as well as access for emergency and service vehicles

LOCALS TIP | If you're going, Hidden Falls Regional Park has experienced great popularity, particularly on weekends and during holiday periods. In some cases, visitors must wait or go elsewhere if the parking area has reached capacity. Placer County Parks and Recreation is excited that Hidden Falls is such a popular place to hike and ride, but please plan your trip accordingly and considering a visit during off-peak times such as the early morning or late afternoon.

Coon Creek WATERSHED ASSESSMENT

Coon Creek in northwestern Placer County originates near Meadow Vista and flows for 18 miles to the Sacramento Valley. The creek offers multiple species benefits, as well as scenic recreation opportunities in Hidden Falls Regional Park. Several rare and threatened flora and fauna are present in Coon Creek, including Central Valley steelhead. The creek and the surrounding riparian habitat currently face threats from development, water diversions, fish passage impediments, and water quality impacts. To identify restoration opportunities Placer County has begun conducting a watershed assessment of Coon Creek.

The Coon Creek Watershed Assessment is part of the proposed Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP). The watershed assessment will provide an opportunity to inform the PCCP conservation strategy about protection and preservation opportunities within the Coon Creek watershed. The outcome of the assessment could be used to provide strategies for restoring lost functions in other watersheds, and will enhance preservation and restoration efforts in Coon Creek.

The assessment began in fall 2014 and paused for the winter rain season. The assessment begins again in April 2015. Over 20 temperature sensors have been place along the creek to obtain baseline temperature information.

Biologists found poor water clarity on the lower reaches of the stream, which are not suitable for salmon spawning. The upper reaches of the creek and Doty Ravine, a tributary of Coon Creek, contain good spawning habitat for salmon. Two potential barriers to fish passage were identified at the NID South Canal Diversion and the bridge and culvert at Garden Bar Road. Biologists also noted the diversity of the creek, with its hilly, canyon-like topography and high energy flows at the upper reaches, and flattening out at the Valley floor to low energy flows.

Successful restoration efforts on Coon Creek could serve as an example of restoring impaired and threatened watersheds throughout Western Placer County, and

may bring back threatened Central Valley steelhead to its historic reaches in the upper Coon Creek watershed.



North American GOLDEN EAGLE



Named for the gold-colored feathers on the back of their heads, North American golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) are a prolific eagle species common in the Western US. Numbering in the tens of thousands across the West, there are only about 500 pairs of golden eagles in California. In Placer County, a pair of golden eagles inhabits Hidden Falls Regional Park.

These birds of prey are known for the size, with a wing span ranging from over 5 feet to over 7 feet. They are known for their speed and soaring flights, and have been clocked at speeds close to 200 miles per hour. Golden eagles are dimorphic, and females are larger than males though their plumage is similar. Golden eagles inhabit rolling foothills, mountain areas, sage-juniper flats, and deserts. They prefer secluded cliffs with overhanging ledges and large trees used for cover, and usually nest on cliffs or in large trees. Golden eagles build large 10-foot wide, 3-foot tall nests of sticks, twigs, and other vegetation.

Golden eagles have been observed attacking calves, lambs, deer, coyotes and foxes, but prefer to hunt small mammals like rabbits and mice, and also eat birds and reptiles. They hunt in pairs over open terrain, soaring 100-300 feet above ground in search of prey. Sometimes they will perch and fly directly to prey or pirate food from other predators.

Golden eagles are found all over the world, and are commonly used in falconry. They are known for their hunting prowess, and in Eurasia, native communities have used golden eagles to hunt gray wolves. Mexico, Austria, Albania, Germany, and Kazakhstan claim the golden eagle as their national animal, making it the most common national animal in the world. The golden eagle is featured on the Albanian and Egyptian flags, and the Mexican flag shows the golden eagle with a serpent in its talon and mouth atop a cactus. In the Arab world, golden eagles symbolize power, and golden eagles were the symbol of Roman legions. In North America, golden eagles were considered sacred by many Native American cultures, including First Nation and Mesoamerican cultures.

Despite its international reverence, golden eagle populations have experienced sharp declines in parts of their ranges, and in some areas golden eagles have become completely extirpated. Human activity is the largest threat to golden eagles, from urbanization and habitat destruction. Deaths from man-made structures are also a common threat to golden eagles, and some utility companies have installed “raptor-friendly” power lines to help reduce threats to eagles and other birds.

Hidden Falls Regional Park has provided this fascinating species with the habitat it loves. Rolling foothills and cliffs for nesting and perching, and open fields for hunting make this park perfect for these large raptors. The nesting pair at Hidden Falls shows the importance of protecting open space and enhances regional biodiversity.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION PROFILE

SARSAS



Save Auburn Ravine Salmon and Steelhead (SARSAS) is a non-profit group of dedicated citizens that has been working to restore Auburn Ravine to enable Chinook salmon and Steelhead trout to return to their historic spawning sites. Many of the streams in Placer County have been altered to such an extent that salmon and steelhead are prevented from reaching their spawning areas, greatly impacting the long-term survival of these species.

SARSAS has worked to remove fish passage barriers, and their latest project is focused on working with the Nevada Irrigation District (NID) to modify Hemphill Dam in Lincoln to allow salmon to move upstream. Hemphill Dam is one of the last barriers to salmon and steelhead to upstream Auburn Ravine.

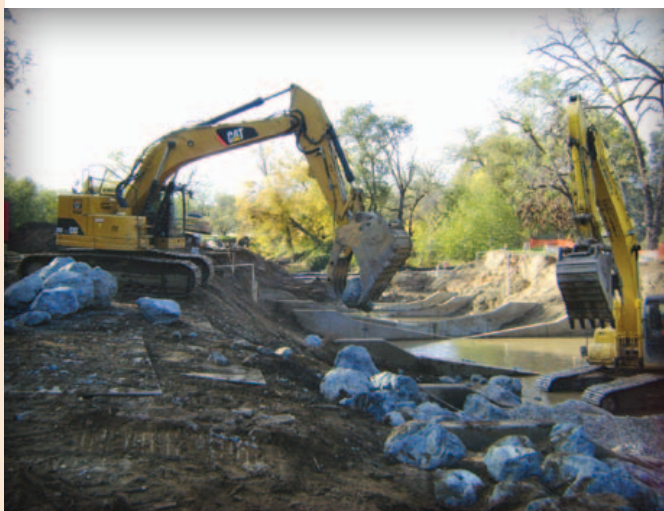
At 6 feet high and 100 feet across, Hemphill Dam prevents most salmon from making it over the concrete dam. Salmon can become injured on the dam as they thrash against the concrete in an attempt to pass over. Once a fish ladder or similar modification is made to the dam, the salmon will be able to reach the cooler, deeper reaches of Auburn Ravine where good spawning habitat awaits.

Fish ladders have been shown to improve fish passage on Auburn Ravine. In 2012, a fish ladder was constructed at the NID Gaging Station in Lincoln. This ladder has been a success, and SARSAS volunteers have spotted salmon upstream of the gaging station and at the bottom of Hemphill Dam.

SARSAS engages in public outreach events to engage the

community about native salmon in local streams. They participate at the annual Salmon Celebration every October in Lincoln, and they invite the community to volunteer with their Citizen Scientist program to observe Auburn Ravine for the presence of salmon and steelhead during their fall, winter, and spring runs. Volunteers and SARSAS leaders recently spotted approximately 1,000 salmon fry schooling near their nesting sites, which will return to Auburn Ravine in three to four years after migrating to the Pacific Ocean this season.

Previous and ongoing SARSAS accomplishments provide a strategy to improve local streams, allowing salmon to return to their historic ranges and ensure good stewardship of our watersheds.



3,000 ACRES

PROTECTED ON DONNER SUMMIT



The Donner Summit is a well-known year round recreation mecca: Boreal Ski Resort, Castle Peak, Sugar Bowl, Granite Chief Wilderness, and the Pacific Crest Trail at the Summit are popular with outdoor enthusiasts. The newest addition to these resources is Royal Gorge, a 3,000 acre property that contains remnants of the area's long history, including rock art from the Martis Culture Native Americans, remnants of historic travel along the Overland Emigrant Trail (OET), and snow sheds from the construction of the Transcontinental Railway. Royal Gorge is also an important migration corridor for 20 species of mammals, 100 species of birds, and more than 500 plant species.

In 2012 The Trust for Public Land and the Truckee Donner Land Trust, worked as part of the Northern Sierra Partnership to raise \$11.25 million to buy the 3,000-acre Royal Gorge property on Donner Summit in the northern Sierra Nevada. In 2012, Sugar Bowl signed long-term lease with the Truckee Donner Land Trust to continue Royal Gorge's operation as a major Nordic ski resort, saving the property from foreclosure in 2011 and a development plan that would have included 950 units.

"At The Trust for Public Land, we conserve land for people, and that is exactly what we have done together here at Donner Summit. [We have] saved a truly special place for this and future generations," said Sam Hodder, California State Director. "The miles of trails through the forests and meadows of Royal Gorge will bring joy to California families for years to come."

The property was purchased from Court-appointed receiver Douglas P. Wilson, who took over the property after a failed development plan to build the 950-unit resort. More than 1,000 people donated to the fundraising campaign, including private funds from local residents at Serene Lakes and Sugar Bowl on Donner Summit and environmental groups. The Palisades, Mountain Area Preservation, Sierra Business Council, North Fork American River Alliance, Sierra Club,

The Nature Conservancy and Sierra Watch also helped raise funds for the campaign.

"This was truly an unprecedented, grassroots fundraising campaign, with nearly 1,400 folks making donations between \$5 and \$1,000,000; a rare event for a community to rally behind saving a piece of land and to raise such a significant amount," said Perry Norris, Executive Director of the Truckee Donner Land Trust. "The signs that had peppered Donner Summit for the last several years went from 'Let's buy it' to 'We did it!'"

Placer County pledged \$300,000 to the Truckee Donner Land Trust, and has

negotiated a funding agreement that detailed the transfer of a 50-foot wide easement across the entire east-west width of the Royal Gorge property to construct a 3 mile interpretive trail and recreation staging area. Environmental surveys and trail alignment surveys are being initiated with the goal of completing the easement by September 2015. Trail construction will follow once the environmental review is complete and funding is secured. This trail will provide access to a portion of the OET that hasn't been accessible to the public for over 50 years.

The California Wildlife Conservation Board approved a \$3 million grant to the Truckee Donner Land Trust to support

the acquisition. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation provided support with bridge funding for the campaign. Overall, the groups raised \$15.5 million to acquire the property and provide for future stewardship and improvements.

"We couldn't have succeeded today without the astounding generosity of hundreds of people who dug deep into their pockets to make this conservation victory possible," said Lucy Blake, President of the Northern Sierra Partnership. "This successful campaign is a testament to the power of collaboration."

Royal Gorge is at Donner Pass, one of the West's best-known historic sites, chiefly because of the tragic story of the ill-fated Donner Party. In 1869, the nation's first transcontinental railroad crossed the Sierra at Donner Summit, opening the region to travelers. The Royal Gorge resort was opened in the 1960s by alpine skier John Slouber. A number of famous winter athletes have trained there, including Glenn Jobe, Katarina Nash, and Marcus Nash.

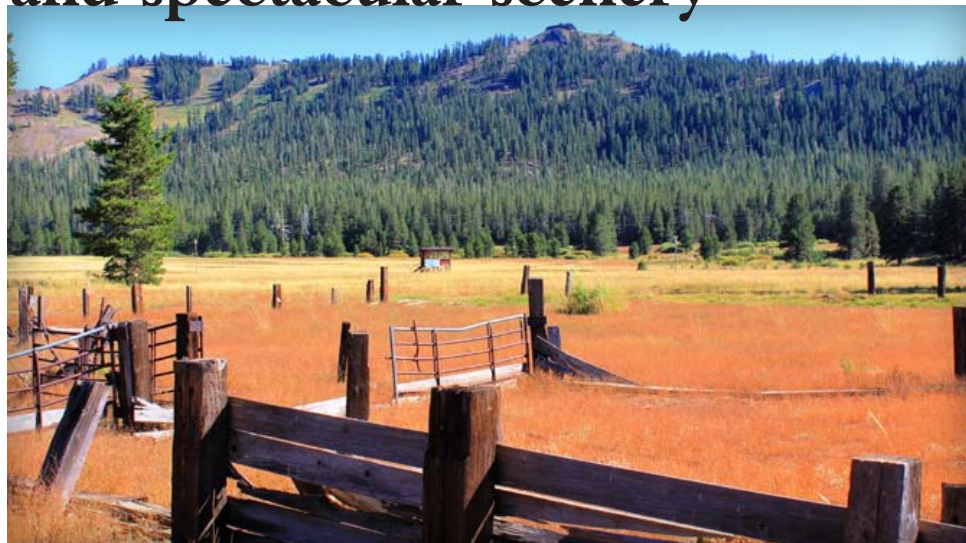
Royal Gorge offers over 120 miles of groomed trails across 6,000 acres on six track systems with eight warming huts, classic striding, cross country skating, snowshoeing, snowkiting, and fat tire snow biking, poising it to claim again its world famous status in the Nordic skiing world. Royal Gorge also contains the headwaters of both the Yuba and American Rivers, and contains one of the few strands of old growth forest that exists outside of a national park.

"This lease agreement with Sugar Bowl ensures the goal the Land Trust, its partners, and area businesses had envisioned; a vibrant, sustainable economy on Donner Summit," said William Thauvette, a Director of the Truckee Donner Land Trust.

The 25-year lease is extendable to 60 years, and will provide the public with access to a swath of the Sierras that has significant historic, scenic, and wildlife resources for years to come.

For more information about exploring the trails and wild places on this remarkable property, visit the Truckee Donner Land Trust at www.tdlandtrust.org.

These trails offer variety and spectacular scenery



- **SUMMIT VALLEY HISTORY TRAIL** | The Summit Valley History Trail is an easy 4-mile loop around Summit Valley, a beautiful sub-alpine valley with history going back 4,000 years to the Martis Culture of Native Americans. Its modern history includes being a brief stopover for emigrants who had just successfully scaled Donner Summit, and being the route of the first transcontinental railroad.
- **LYLE'S LOOKOUT** | A short three-mile hike from Summit Station provides a spectacular view of the iconic Devil's Peak and the Land Trust's Snow Mountain project.
- **ROWTON PEAK** | This moderately strenuous 4-mile hike leads through several wildflower and bird areas, offers expansive views of the Pacific Crest and the Granite Chief Wilderness, and passes through some impressive volcanic geology.
- **POINT MARIAH** | The highlight of this 5-mile moderate route is a viewpoint down 4,000 feet into the Royal Gorge of the North Fork of the American River.

EXPLORE

Green Valley Trail



In 2003, Placer County acquired a trail and conservation easement on 235 acres of land in Alta from the Towle family. This easement allowed for the creation of a trail that begins at the top of the American River canyon and progresses to the North Fork of the American River below. The trail offers views of the steep canyons of the river, as well as Giant Gap and Green Valley, two geologically significant areas in this portion of the North Fork.

The easement on the Towle property provides the public with scenic opportunities and hiking. The trail passes through conifer forest and manzanita communities. Deer, squirrel, snakes, Western fence lizards, hawks, and a variety of other birds can be found in this area. Poison oak is also very common, and hikers should prepare accordingly.

The easement also preserves plant and animal diversity and ensures the property will be protected from development in perpetuity. The Towle conservation easement is one of Placer Legacy's many accomplishments in protecting Placer County's natural resources.



DIRECTIONS

to Green Valley Trail

- 1 Take I-80 East to the Alta-Bonny Nook exit.
- 2 Take a right off of the freeway and make an immediate left on Casa Loma Road.
- 3 Turn right onto Casa Loma Road, and then make another right onto Moody Ridge Road.
- 4 When Moody Ridge Road and Aquila Road split, take Moody Ridge Road to the right.
- 5 The parking lot will be on the left, approximately .30 miles from the split.
- 6 Follow the trail at the parking lot to Aquila Road. Take a right on Aquila and follow the signs.
- 7 The trail is on the left.

Fifteen Years of

PLACER LEGACY

Farming and ranching have been part of the economic, cultural, and environmental fabric of Placer County since the first mass arrivals of Europeans and the discovery of gold near Auburn 1848. Protecting farmland is a way for the public to produce food and fiber, maintain open space, retain natural systems and processes, control public infrastructure costs, preserve the local economic base and local self-sufficiency, promote rural lifestyles, maintain local specialty crops and conserve energy. Protecting farmland also assists with groundwater recharge, flood storage and to conserve wildlife habitat.

In April of 1998, the Placer County Board of Supervisors directed the Planning Department to prepare a program to implement the conservation goals and policies of the 1994 Placer County General Plan Policy Document. This program, known as the Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program, was adopted in June of 2000.

Placer Legacy implementation requires partnerships with State, Federal and Non-profit funding sources to assist with:

- Funding for conservation easements and land acquisition
 - Passive park improvements
 - Oak woodlands protection
 - Vernal pool protection and restoration
 - Trail easements and construction
 - Riparian restoration and streambank restoration projects
 - Fish passage improvement projects
 - Wetland protection and restoration
- Education and outreach programs
 - Water quality testing and monitoring

To date, the County has worked with willing-seller property owners and other agencies to conserve 9,644 acres of land throughout the county. Through the program, the County is retaining its unique natural heritage, minimizing conflicts in achieving conservation and development goals, and enhancing the quality of life of current and future residents.



PRE-SORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PLACER COUNTY

THE IMPORTANCE
OF OPEN SPACE

- Provides tranquility amid the rush and bustle of life
- Maintains the natural environmental processes and balances, helping to ensure a high quality water supply
- Preserves our connection with the natural world
- Helps lessen pollution by absorbing contaminants from our air and water
- Preserves areas of scenic beauty, and protects the semi-rural character of outlying areas
- Preserves lands that are not suited for development
- Provides land for active and leisure recreation
- Provides habitat for birds, fish and other wildlife

CONSERVATION EASEMENT
TAX BENEFITS

There may be tax benefits to donating or selling a conservation easement on your property. In order to qualify for an income tax deduction, the easement must be a) permanent b) held by a qualified organization and c) serve a valid conservation purpose, meaning that the property must have natural, scenic, historic, scientific, recreational, or open space value.

Interested in learning more? Placer Legacy will be producing a conservation easement brochure later this year.



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